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A STUDY OF AGNES BERNAUER

BY

ANNA L. BOND

THESIS

FOR THE

DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

IN

GERMAN

IN THE

GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

ANNA L. BOND

ENTITLED A STUDY OF AGNES BERNAUER

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

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A STUDY OF AGNES BERNAUER

The story of Agnes Bernauer is one that has appealed to several German dramatists as containing material sufficiently dramatic for a tragedy. Because of Agnes' close relation to the history of Bavaria, Joseph August, Graf von Törring, a Bavarian, determined to write a national play. Accordingly in 1780, appeared his "Agnes Bernauerin." This story has exercised a peculiar fascination on many, but no one has probably given more time and consideration to it than Otto Ludwig. However, he left only fragments dealing with this subject, for he never grasped the plot as a whole. It seemed to him capable of so many and such varied interpretations. The most complete fragment, that of 1846, is developed only to the second scene of the third act, so that the climax is not reached, and it is impossible to tell what Ludwig had intended the catastrophe to be. Not until 1854 did Ludwig resume work on this subject. Then he did not finish "Der Engel von Augsburg" of 1846, but began his "Agnes Bernauer," of which only one act was ever finished. Ludwig's incentive to this, his last attempt, was Hebbel's "Agnes Bernauer" which appeared in 1852. This re-awakened interest was due to the fact that Ludwig felt Hebbel had not shown enough emotion; Albrecht and Agnes were styled by Ludwig as cold. His intention was to change this, but as was repeatedly the case with him, there is only the fragment of 1854 to remind us of his project. Hebbel, on the other hand, following in the footsteps of Törring, who carefully followed historical sources, has written his "Agnes Bernauer" with a steady, unflinching purpose in view. Hence, for comparison we have the two complete

dramas- Törring's "Agnes Bernauerin" and Hebbel's "Agnes Bernauer" together with the two fragments of Ludwig which differ decidedly from Törring and Hebbel.

The best means for bringing clearly before us the differences between Törring and Hebbel in treating the Agnes Bernauer theme, is to state the story- as dramatized by each. In an account of Törring's life we are told that he faithfully followed history; the story being as follows:

Albrecht, son of Ernst, the Duke of Bavaria, has secretly married a "Bürger mädchen" of Augsburg, thus disarranging his father's plans for his future. Ernst receives reports regarding Albrecht's actions, but he gives no credence to them. However, Albrecht is summoned to appear at a tournament, at Regensburg. Here, before the assembled knighthood, he is publicly disgraced, being accused of violating the laws of chivalry. Albrecht denies this, proclaims Agnes as his wife, and summons his father's enemies and the common people to his side. Ernst had believed that Albrecht would renounce Agnes, when he felt his honor offended by his marriage to her, a mere "Bürger mädchen." Albrecht, however, does not fulfill Ernst's expectations. Then Ernst sees the necessity of a reconciliation with Albrecht, his successor. Accordingly, ambassadors are sent to soothe Albrecht, and to arouse his zeal for the state by commissioning him to attend to some important matters of state. While Albrecht is carrying out his duties, Agnes is taken prisoner by the vicedom, whom Albrecht had struck at the tournament, and is judged guilty of being a witch, of having enticed Albrecht into marriage. Yet, before this, there is an attempt made by Thorring to save Agnes from death, by causing her to repudiate her marriage to the duke. This, she persistently refuses to do, so, when captured by the vicedom, she is condemned and drowned. Ernst had not desired that the action

of the vicedom be carried so far, but when he and Albrecht meet, just after Agnes' death, the all-convincing logic of Ernst overcomes Albrecht's vows of vengeance. A preserved Bavaria is to be his comfort for the loss of Agnes- a martyr to the needs of the state.

These same facts Hebbel has used, but in how different a manner! His dramatic sense is much keener than Törring's and his reverence for history much less. Törring has interpreted historical facts just as any reader of history might, but Hebbel has interpreted them in a most dramatic manner. He peers below the surface and seeks to explain more clearly the motives underlying the acts of each individual. The motives used by Törring are considered as not noble enough for the glorious history of Bavaria, so Hebbel's purpose is to ennoble the motives and thus raise the characters to a higher plane. The tragedy is intensified by such motivation as causes Ernst to be the force which brings about Agnes' death. To bring this tragedy to a higher plane, meant the difficult task of justifying the actions of Ernst- justifying them so that not only we, but Albrecht is forced to acknowledge that his father was right. Even a hasty perusal brings out clearly this justification, and a closer study is even more convincing.

Hebbel's drama must be related in a somewhat more detailed manner than Törring's, because of the greater intricacy. Duke Albrecht meets Agnes, the beautiful "Bürgermädchen," the result of which is a case of love at first sight. He openly sued for her hand, but her father Kaspar does everything in his power to prevent her from marrying the duke. Albrecht's friends realize the consequences of such a marriage, the danger to the state, and they attempt compromises. Törring, because of his devotion to the state, even goes so far as to propose to Kaspar and Agnes that Agnes

become the duke's mistress. The pure Agnes, greatly offended by this, announces her intention of seeking a cloister. The duke, who calls on Agnes at just this moment, is ready to run Törring through, but Törring, acknowledging the nobility of Agnes, pleading devotion to the state, and asking to befriend the duke and Agnes in time of need, is graciously pardoned by Agnes. Being secretly married, Albrecht and Agnes enter the Elysian life, which is, however, disturbed all too soon. Ernst, the enlightened despot, is planning already, now that Albrecht is freed from his betrothed, (who had eloped) to form an alliance with Braunschweig, a country with which Bavaria has always been at war. This alliance is to be cemented by the marriage of Albrecht and Anna. Ernst, relying on Albrecht's certain consent, and ignoring the rumors from Augsburg, invites Albrecht to a tournament where he expects to announce the engagement. Albrecht, refusing to marry Anna von Braunschweig, is publicly disgraced by Ernst, who accuses him of breaking knightly vows. Burning with rage, Albrecht announces his marriage to Agnes. When Ernst then declares his nephew Adolf as his successor, Albrecht summons the Bavarians to aid him to retain his natural heritage. Agnes probably keeps Albrecht from war against his father, and two and a half years of peace pass, which bring death, however, to Ernst's brother, and to his nephew Adolf. Albrecht must now succeed Ernst if Bavaria is to remain intact. Just as Adolf dies we find Preising, the chancellor, reading an old document- one which lacks the duke's signature. It is two and a half years old, and is a condemnation of Agnes Bernauer, by the ablest judges of the realm, who pronounce death upon her for having enticed Albrecht into marriage, thus bringing danger upon the state. Necessity demands the execution of this decree, and it is planned to capture Agnes while Albrecht is attending a tournament. Preising tries to save her

life by suggesting that she take the veil. Agnes' appeal to the judge is in vain, and she suffers death by being drowned. Albrecht's intense rage is aroused, and he begins to avenge the death of Agnes by burning and slaying. Ernst remonstrates with Albrecht, and shows him the fruitlessness of his attempts at vengeance, but Albrecht can not be reasoned with, since passion masters him. The ban of the state, i.e., the ban of the Holy Roman Empire, is pronounced on him. He is still unrelenting, when the ban of the church is about to be pronounced. Ernst, at last, interferes, makes Albrecht duke and thus the judge of his father. Then Ernst goes into a monastery for a year, after which he is to come and receive Albrecht's judgment. No longer does Ernst fear for the outcome, for he knows that as a ruler, Albrecht can clearly justify him.

For the stage Hebbel realized that the drama was too long drawn out after the death of Agnes, so he recast the latter part, shortening it by several pages. It is really a better ending being shorter, more concise and not involving so many minor details. Albrecht, hearing of the death of Agnes, rushes on the stage, and greets Preising with these words, "Where is your lord?" Preising answers, saying, "He stands before me," and then explains to Albrecht that Ernst has abdicated in his favor. Albrecht plans to use his power as duke to avenge. Preising tells Albrecht that he can never slay his father, for Ernst will anticipate him by committing suicide. Albrecht sinks down almost lifeless upon hearing this, and acknowledges his powerlessness to avenge Agnes. The play closes with these words of Preising, said while looking heavenward, "You could have prevented this sacrifice, but you could not bring it to shame," which shows that when noble persons act from the best motives, they may be forced to make a heavy sacrifice, yet no disgrace can result from such actions.

AGNES BERNAUER

Agnes Bernauer is presented to us as a "Bürgermädchen" of great beauty-beauty so surpassing as to merit the title "Der Engel von Augsburg." So charming, so bewitching is she, that all the young girls of Augsburg are jealous. Even Knippeldollinger, the old dandy, is captivated and aspires to her hand. Although so wonderfully beautiful, Agnes is not arrogant or disdainful, for her father's apprentice, Theobald, does not think it at all impossible that she may marry him. Agnes is never guilty of coquetry, and this causes her to be even more charming. Barbara and the other girls wish that she would stoop to coquetry so that Augsburg youths would not regard her as a goddess, a being divine. Agnes' attractiveness is the alluring charm of a beautiful, modest nun- "a nun and yet none."

Yet with all her simplicity and innocence, Agnes has often been compelled to shudder before the trouble and strife occasioned by her rare beauty. She dislikes to offend any one, and has begun to believe her proper sphere is the cloister. Although Agnes is not at all a child of the world she is very conscious of the difference in station between the duke and herself. It is a difference which her father has probably taught her to feel. As an individual, she feels herself the equal of the duke, while in the world's eyes, she knows there is an immense chasm between them. It is this that enables her always to conduct herself with dignity in the duke's presence, and to jest at his protestations of love. She will not permit him to deceive her, to toy with her. She strives to bring the duke to his senses by saying that such questions must be addressed to a princess, not to her. Only when the duke sues for her hand, does Agnes permit her emotion

to be seen. Hitherto, she has had perfect control over herself. Even then she realizes the incompatibility of a union with the duke, and is willing to take the veil. Only when she realizes the thorough nobility of the duke, and her fervent love, does her reason, her intuition, yield to her overwhelming love. It is the man, not the duke, who wins Agnes. Her moral courage, reinforced by her reason, might have prevented Agnes from marrying the duke, had it not been he vindicated his honor so nobly, just after Agnes has been induced by Törring to disbelieve in his honor. Her surrender to his ardent entreaties is simply the opposite swing of the pendulum; it could not be otherwise.

The intensity of Agnes' love can never be doubted, for she is willing to marry the duke secretly; thus permitting the world to misjudge her. It is sufficient to her if God knows they are wedded. No woman can be happy with this seeming blemish on her character, yet Agnes is perhaps less unhappy than another might be under similar circumstances because of her intense love. The spirit of self-sacrifice always breathes in her. Shortly after her marriage, she feels that her death is the only solution to the tangled condition of affairs, and she begins to prepare for death, but does not want the duke to see her preparations in that light. She is willing to sacrifice self, and rebels only when self-sacrifice means loss of honor. To have adopted Preising's suggestion of entering a nunnery would have been self-sacrifice, yet she could have saved her life, but this sacrifice, as well as suicide, would have been interpreted amiss. Agnes can sacrifice everything but honor, and only by allowing the court to carry out its decree can she vindicate her honor. Her words just before the sentence of the court is executed, show how honor was her dearest possession: "Pure was my first breath, and pure also shall my last be. Do to me whatever you must.

I will suffer it."

There are only minor differences between the Agnes of Hebbel and that of Törring, yet these serve to make Hebbel's Agnes more interesting. In Törring, there is a much stronger tendency toward sentimentality. The fact that Agnes so often has recourse to tears, detracts considerably from her personality. It savors too much of the "Sturm und Drang."

In Ludwig's "Der Engel von Augsburg, the conception of Agnes differs decidedly from Hebbel and Törring. Ludwig believed that their treatment, their conception of Agnes, was wholly unfit for a tragedy. He thought Agnes had no dramatic guilt, and therefore she should not be made to suffer. Accordingly, he creates Agnes as a coquette- a treatment which is not historically correct and does not appeal to me. Agnes, the coquette, resorts to trickery to deceive Albrecht, and marries him simply because he is a duke. We miss entirely the noble, lovable Agnes, who does not permit pomp and glittering tinsel to charm her. In Ludwig's other treatment, we find Agnes very humble, very considerate of others. But she is not at all Hebbel's conception. Being a trifle too humble, too submissive to the rude jealous lover, Raimund, Ludwig's Agnes certainly lacks the queenly dignity, the intelligence, and self-mastery that distinguish Hebbel's Agnes.

DUKE ALBRECHT

At first it is somewhat difficult to realize that Albrecht is Ernst's son, for Albrecht is guided by emotion, Ernst by reason. This characteristic alone assures us that there will be a tragedy in his life, as one's emotions alone do not furnish a safe criterion. Albrecht is probably safer than most people with such a standard to regulate their actions, for his emotions spring from principles honest and noble to the very core. This nobility, we see in the first act when Albrecht is unwilling that the forfeit money should be paid by Würtemberg, for he feels that he too has practically broken the engagement. Since he has seen Agnes, he rejoices that he is free from the contemplated marriage. Albrecht born a prince is really not a prince when we first meet him. He must be developed into one. The cares of state weigh lightly on him, for he does not realize what the state requires of its rulers. However, his nobility of character is worthy of a prince. This is shown especially when Albrecht is led to believe that Frauenhoven too loves Agnes, for he frees himself from his "Lehnspflicht," and then declares it is war to the death between them. His position as prince did not demand this action, but his nobility of character showed this to him as the proper course.

The love of Albrecht and Agnes reminds one very forcibly of Romeo and Juliet, for it is so ardent as to make life an ecstasy. The whole world has changed for Albrecht; he has just begun to live. Now, after seeing Agnes, he begins to realize the thanks he owes his father for saving his life on the battlefield. Before, the trumpets announcing victory were his ideal of happiness, now, he looks at everything from a different point of view. His friends seem suddenly to become unsympathetic, and their reasons

of state have no effect on him. He remembers they have never loved, they can't understand him, and he will have none of their advice.

This revolution only renders slower the process of evolving the prince. Even before the marriage, it seems to me the prince in Albrecht is slightly roused for the very bravado of his assertions to the hesitating Agnes, signifies that he is somewhat doubtful of the consequences, yet his great love for Agnes, which he feels God will justify, leads him on. To cast aside Agnes' sense of impending danger, seems to him, his duty which he always does in a graceful, reassuring manner, thus trying to disarm her fears. The interpretation he gives to the death's head, his mother's legacy to him, is simply to relieve the fears of Agnes. He has an indistinct, inexplicable feeling that things are not just as they should be, but the fervor of his love blinds him to this feeling when he is with Agnes. His expression, just before Preising enters, in that exquisite scene where he and Agnes discover the messages and gifts of his deceased mother- "Das war eine Stunde; nun komme die zweite," foreshadows interference in their idyllic love. In spite of this feeling, which is practically an unconscious one, to Albrecht it seems inexplicable that a prince should not enjoy all the privileges of a man, as well as those of a prince. He does not comprehend the price one pays for being a prince; he does not understand the law of compensation. The human element has the upper hand; it will require chastening to develop the prince in Albrecht. The germ is there; it is only sleeping. Occasionally it seems aroused, only to become dormant again. One of these occasions is when Albrecht plans to collect an army to oppose Ernst's policy of succession. He is not to be cheated of his rights. Yet he does not carry on war against his father, for which we have Agnes to thank. The death of Agnes, however, causes his violent pas-

sions to burst forth, and it seems impossible to appease them. The ducal staff does not suffice to awaken the prince. Real experience as a ruler is necessary to show Albrecht that Ernst had acted best. Such stern measures as these are necessary to evolve the prince in Albrecht.

Hebbel's conception is much akin to Törring's portrayal of Albrecht. But, in Törring, Albrecht is aroused much earlier to a realization that he has sinned against princely duty. His ultimatum, before Thorring visits him is, "Agnes, duchess, or war." but Thorring's picture of princely duty draws from him the wish that he had never been in Augsburg. He does what I fancy Hebbel's Albrecht could never have done- he is willing to compromise if Agnes may be acknowledged as his wife, although never as duchess. Thorring's appeal owes its effect to this fact that he laid aside his dislike of Ernst, and came to plead for Bavaria's safety. With such patriotism, Albrecht is aroused to princely duty. Because of a earlier realization of a sense of duty to the state Albrecht's rage is more easily assuaged in Törring's than in Hebbel's drama. Hebbel's Albrecht is to me far more attractive than Törring's, just because of the sterner measures needed to develop the prince. Like a spirited steed, broken only when exhausted, Albrecht has learned that his master is not Albrecht, as he had fancied, but the people, the state. His life is now to be devoted to their service.

Ludwig's conception of Albrecht is that he cares even less for knight-hood and court ceremonies with their shams than Törring's or Hebbel's conception. His thoughts are continually on music, poetry, and philosophy. He would willingly exchange his lot with some lowly person, for court duties are very irksome to him. He has no desire to be duke. In "Der Engel von Augsburg," we find him still an idealist who is very proud of his sharp wit. He seems unable, however, to come to a definite decision. He thinks as he

desires to think, though he may have proof that the contrary is true. Often his moments of passion are moments of indecision. He takes particular delight in expressing his thought tersely, in heaping up figures of speech. He flees from the real to the ideal. Agnes must be what he thinks she is. Albrecht really has the ideas of a reformer. He sees below the hollow mask of things, but he does not understand how to change existing circumstances. In his attempts to bring about changes, we find him defeated by the force of custom and tradition. In this fragment, we are not permitted to see the awakening of the prince, but it would probably occur near the close of the drama, as in Hebbel, for the more idealistic the nature, the longer it takes to develop a sense of the fitness of that which mere expediency demands- in this case expediency being necessity.

DUKE ERNST

Neither in Törring nor in Ludwig does Duke Ernst play an important role; he is simply a figure head. So to Hebbel belongs the honor of having created Ernst, the strongest and best portrayed character of the drama, not, however, a character in the process of evolution as in Albrecht. All that was gross in Ernst's character has been eliminated by the refining process of a reign, which possessed as its cardinal principle the welfare of the state, and Ernst's character can now be pronounced sterling. Ernst is for me the most interesting character in the drama, although Törring and Ludwig have politely ignored him.

All would agree, I am sure, that true nobility stamps Ernst, and that he is eminently fitted for his position. He may be classed among the "enlightened despots" who exercised their power in the interests of the people. Ernst possesses practically absolute power, but he never abuses it. His justice is acknowledged by all, a justice merciful wherever possible. He had extensive plans in view, not for self aggrandizement, but to reclaim what Bavaria had lost through misfortune and careless rulers. Thinking always of the state, Ernst has planned benefits for his people through Albrecht's marriage. Probably Ernst is glad that Elizabeth of Württemberg (Albrecht's fiancée) has eloped, for Bavaria will now receive the forfeit money, and immediately he plans the marriage of Albrecht and Anna von Braunschweig, which is to close a strife of long standing. Albrecht's inclinations are not asked; he has seemed content to marry Elizabeth, why not Anna, neither of whom he has seen. To our democratic ideas, this seems heartless, but marriages among the royalty of Europe are often planned as policies of state.

Ernst is not heartless. We have abundant evidence of this when we see him musing over his wife's tomb and when he recalls Albrecht and his boyish pranks. He suffers much in order that he may not appear heartless. Rather than cause the death of Agnes, he disinherits his son Albrecht, probably one of the greatest sacrifices a ruler can make.

Ernst appeals to us because of his simplicity in taste, in speech, and in manners. Simplicity of taste is shown when he bids the Meister von Köln to place the highly ornamented monument on his own grave, for it is inconsistent with the nature of the queen. Simplicity of speech is seen in his talks to Preising where he announces in very succinct form the decision he has made and why. Simplicity of manner is seen in the fact that he never stoops to deceit, to conceal that he is really responsible for Agnes' death. All that he does and plans he is willing to open to inspection. He does not evade replies to the direct questioning of Preising. Simplicity is said to be a marked characteristic of a really great man, and Ernst certainly possesses simplicity in a marked degree.

Although ruler, Ernst's life is not one of ease. He is a most indefatigable worker. As affairs demand more time, he informs Preising they are to begin work an hour earlier. His subjects realize he is working for them, is interested in them and what they do, so we find a peasant coming to court to show the large ear of corn he has raised. Even on the battlefield Ernst stops to visit a peasant's hut, to see how they live.

Like Kaspar, Ernst has great confidence in his child. He knows Albrecht's nature, and he feels he can not act ignobly. Still less can he believe Albrecht can act contrary to royal custom- the breaking down of a barrier which will cause war and the dissolution of Bavaria, the firm welding of which Ernst hopes to accomplish with Albrecht's aid.

The state has demanded sacrifices from Ernst and he always subordinates self to the state. By sacrificing his hope in regard to the succession, Ernst avoids civil war. The death of Adolf rendering necessary the succession of Albrecht in order to maintain a united Bavaria, Ernst is forced to sign the death warrant for Agnes. This sacrifice reveals Ernst's innate nobility, for he cannot offer Agnes a life without honor, and the only solution to the problem is then Agnes' death. What appears on the surface sternness is really clemency, and Ernst atones as much as possible for Agnes' death by acknowledging her as Albrecht's "Witwe." Ernst is capable of a still greater sacrifice. When he sees Albrecht can not forgive and will wage war, he abdicates, thus making Albrecht reigning duke. Everything is sacrificed that the state may have peace. Preising tells Albrecht who, even as duke, seems ready to murder his father, that Ernst will commit suicide before he will allow Albrecht to stain his hands. Where is another example of such devotion to the state!

KASPAR BERNAUER

In Hebbel all of the characters are conceived in a loftier plane than in Ludwig and Törring. This is particularly true when one compares Ludwig and Hebbel. In Törring, Kaspar does not appear; only slight mention is made of him. In Hebbel's Kaspar, we find a thoroughly honest, upright surgeon, proud of his profession, and conscious of great pleasure in doing his work well. He has a craving for knowledge, likes to delve into the uncanny and mysterious, yet is after all only a plodding student. He is a representative of the time when the guilds thought it their particular duty to protect and to encourage learning. Kaspar is very suspicious of the nobility and the motives which animate them. He wishes to have nothing to do with them, unless they require his medical attention. The words which he addresses to the nobles are in themselves very respectful, yet, I can not help feeling there is something in the manner of speaking that shows his insincerity, or if there is nothing in his manner to indicate this, he enjoys the privilege of laughing covertly at them. In spite of the fact that he scorns the nobility and their ideas of honor, he feels his helplessness against them. It is the helplessness that Emilia Calotte's father feels. This is brought out in Ludwig, and is hinted at by Törring. Although there is a similarity in Odoardo and in Kaspar, there is a striking difference. The former's helplessness is aggravated by the fear that Emilia will fall a victim to her pleasure in finery and court life, while Kaspar's is lessened by his implicit confidence in Agnes. He can plan to thwart the duke, for there are some laws even the nobility must respect; hence, his plan to bring about the marriage of Agnes and Theobald. This confidence and pride in Agnes is one of the most attractive qualities of

Kaspar. He knows she will receive Thorring's proposition with the scorn it merits. Agnes' reply to Thorring gives Kaspar new hope. He becomes bold enough to say that his honor and his daughter's can be protected even if not according to knightly manners or rules. He threatens Thorring with the justice of the "Vehmgericht"- a body before which even kings tremble. Kaspar, to be sure, is not a man of sentiment, yet at times his feelings master his reason. The best example of this is when he is blessing Agnes and Albrecht. Here his feelings seem to tell him it is the will of God, yet he is never really convinced. He feels a sense of guilt ever afterwards, and never visits Agnes. Her marriage seemed to him to be her death, and we find him carrying out what had been the great desire of her simple life- her passionate desire to purchase a small garden plot.

Ludwig's treatment of Kaspar in his "Agnes Bernauer" makes of Kaspar a nobler man than does his "Engel von Augsburg." In the former, Kaspar refuses the proposition of the Stadtschreiber regarding marriage to Agnes, saying that he believes in "like to like." In the latter treatment Kaspar is portrayed as having no confidence in his daughter. Of course, here the character of Agnes is not so noble, and we should not expect so much paternal pride, but a suspicious father, especially when his suspicions are not justifiable, never is a pleasing character.

Had Torring portrayed Kaspar, there is reason to believe, just from the few words which Agnes says in regard to her father, that he would have resembled Hebbel's Kaspar. At least, what Agnes says is thoroughly consistent with Hebbel's conception.

STRUCTURE OF HEBBEL'S "AGNES BERNAUER"

Aristotle has said that a drama is at its best when it depicts a complete action, a plot with a beginning, middle and end. Hebbel's treatment depicts for us the entire action, which is not true of Törring, who begins his drama sometime after the rising action. A play always loses by such treatment, because it is a difficult matter to make us acquainted with the previous events without causing us to feel that such is the purpose of the scene. This is particularly true of the first two "Auftritte" in Törring, where in a somewhat fervent exchange of confidence between Albrecht and Agnes, the preceding action is disclosed to us. This is certainly a very thin veil. From the two fragments of Ludwig we see it was his plan to depict a complete action.

In order to explain and to criticise the structure of a German drama it is better to arrange it according to our method, making the scene, often composed of several "Auftritte," the unit. It is much more profitable to discuss the drama by scenes, as in many cases the single "Auftritt" is of slight importance.

Act I, Scene I. Auftritt (1-13) Baderstube

Scene II. Auftritt (14-16) Herberge in Augsburg

Scene III. Auftritt (17-21) Tanzsaal

The purpose of Act I is to introduce us to Agnes' world, so that it may serve as a contrast to that of the duke. We are made acquainted with the setting of the story, the year, and the events of the time. The first

scene depicts the simple life of Agnes. The second scene serves to introduce Albrecht and his followers, and to give to the drama its initial impulse, which is felt when Albrecht sees Agnes, when he expresses his feelings in these words, "Hast du das Mädchen gesehen?" "Das Mädchen" is sufficient to characterize Agnes, thinks the duke, and he can not understand why his friends should reply "Welche denn?" This slight touch shows the depth of his passion, as does also the countermanding of his orders regarding the forfeit money. This latter shows the duke not as a duke, but as a man; the value of that forfeit money does not appeal to him. Still further emphasis is given to this point by the duke's removing his armor and appearing simply as a man; "der Mensch" is uppermost. All of Albrecht's followers, Frauenhoven, Wernberg and Törring comprehend the danger of the duke, for the nobility would never permit Agnes, a simple "Bürgermädchen" to become duchess. The attitude of Albrecht's followers forecast the plot which is to be a fight for individuality- a struggle of the individual against the laws of the state. The third scene permits no doubt of Albrecht's honorable intentions, and foreshadows the forces that are to attempt to thwart Albrecht, namely; Kaspar, Albrecht's followers and probably Ernst. The closing words of the act are effective for they show the intensity of Albrecht's love and prepare us for the following scenes. He is lamenting the fact that he has not yet heard Agnes speak his name, and he says, "Yet who wishes to celebrate Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide all at once?"

Act II. Scene I. Auftritt (1-2) Herberge zu Augsburg

Scene II. Auftritt (3-10) Baderstube

The purpose of Scene I is to acquaint us with the affairs of state which Wernberg, Törring and Frauenhoven discuss. It is a perfectly natural discussion occasioned by the attitude of Albrecht toward Agnes. Törring decides to anticipate and thus defeat Albrecht's plan. All of the nobles want, at least, to prevent a marriage. Albrecht is incapable of appreciating their fears, as he fears neither nobles, father nor the state. The purpose of Scene II is to show Kaspar's plan of thwarting the duke, whose intentions Kaspar fears. He tries to persuade Agnes to marry his apprentice, Theobald, whose intense devotion has been already shown in Act I. Agnes refuses, and declares her intention of entering a cloister. Törring, carrying out his plan, anticipates Albrecht's visit to the Bernauers, and explains to them, what he says is the duke's proposition, that Agnes is to be the duke's wife in all but name. Kaspar hears the proposition with joy, for he knows Agnes is saved to him. She can no longer love such a man. Albrecht appears, shows his honorable intentions, forces Törring to acknowledge the falsity of his proposition, wins Agnes' consent to be his, and makes preparations for a secret marriage.

The purpose, then of Act II as a whole, is to carry out the duke's plan even against the advice of his followers. The failure of Kaspar's measures, and of Törring's plan show that Albrecht has overcome all of the obstacles of the opposition, with the exception of Ernst, whose opposition has been hinted at, but of whose support Albrecht feels certain. Albrecht has only seemingly conquered these obstacles, for the marriage is after all a secret marriage. It must be publicly acknowledged, before he has really

defied the "Ritterschaft"- the aristocracy. This act is characterized by especially artistic foreshadowing, of which the following are good examples. (1) Törring sues for Agnes' friendship, and says it is not wise for Albrecht to diminish the number of his friends. (2) Agnes rushes into Albrecht's arms, saying, "And even if I must pay for it with death- that matters nothing." (3) A most excellent example of dramatic irony, as well as foreshadowing, is shown when those who are to be present at the secret marriage, are asked to appear in disguise as if at a "Totendienst." (4) The close of the act, when Albrecht asks for Kaspar's blessing, and Kaspar responds- "You are afraid, otherwise, that you will receive no blessing."

Act III. Scene I. Auftritt (1-6) München

Scene II. Auftritt (7-12) Bow-windowed room, Vohburg

Scene III. Auftritt (13-14) Regensburg-Turnier Platz

The purpose of Scene I is to introduce Duke Ernst and his plans to restore Bavaria. The conflict between him and Albrecht is distinctly felt. The magnitude and importance of his plans foreshadow the coming clash. The character Ernst, is considered here as very important by Hebbel, and he is seen in a pleasing light. The purpose of Scene II is to show the idyllic love of Albrecht and Agnes, which has, however, a conscious undercurrent of trouble brewing. Preising, the chancellor, makes known to Albrecht the plans of Duke Ernst, explaining his duties as prospective ruler to him. This argument, pro and con, is sharp and trenchant on each side, a skillfully managed dialogue. Scene III shows clearly Ernst's plans can not be crossed without trouble. Here in the tournament scene the climax occurs.

Albrecht is present, thus keeping his promise to Preising. The tournament, always a picturesque scene, is now doubly important as it forms the setting for the dénouement, where Ernst, after hearing Albrecht's announcement of his marriage to Agnes, disinherits Albrecht, making his nephew Adolf, a sick, puny boy, his successor.

The purpose of Act III, as a unit, is to give to the successful rising action its first decisive check. Albrecht is not vanquished—he still asserts his rights as Ernst's son and allies himself with Ludwig, who desires nothing more than to see Bavaria dismembered. Albrecht's belief, that he could follow his own inclinations and yet remain duke, has received a heavy, crushing blow. The foreshadowing in this act is also very good. Ernst's plan, hinted at, if Albrecht does not conform to his wishes, is developed in the tournament scene. Another instance of foreshadowing is the discovery of his mother's legacy; to him, the death's head, to Agnes, the jewels. The nephew Adolf has been spoken of as a "Jammersbild," so we are prepared for the development of the next act.

Act IV. Scene I. Auftritt (1-4) München-Herzogliches Kabinett

Scene II. Auftritt (5-12) Straubing

Scene I shows the futility of Ernst's change in the succession, for his brother has died, and now two and a half years after Adolf has been appointed successor, Adolf also dies. Albrecht must perforce be Ernst's successor. But Agnes can not be duchess, and the only means of separating the duke and Agnes, is the death of Agnes. The old document Preising finds at the beginning of the act is a condemnation of Agnes Bernauer, as a witch, who has ensnared Albrecht. This document, now two and a half years

old, must receive Ernst's signature. Scene II shows Agnes' constant, intuitive feeling of danger, for she has prepared a vault for herself. Albrecht's hope of the dukeship, which has remained the same as at his disinheritance, now rises when news of the death of Adolf is received. Agnes' fears are realized, for during Albrecht's absence she is captured by Ernst's order. Törring guards her till death, thus fulfilling his oath of allegiance to her. The escape of Theobald, who has brought news of the approaching troops, serves as a means of hastening the return of Albrecht. Preising's plan to save Agnes is hinted at. Thus, there is good preparation for Act IV. The plans of Ernst are being developed, thus making Albrecht's case more hopeless, even at the time it seems to him to brighten. The close is effective, providing action for the following act.

Act V. Scene I. Auftritt (1-3) Kerker

Auftritt (4-12) Offenes Feld

The purpose of Scene I is by means of the trial to show the necessity of Agnes' death, for only by her death can the state be saved, and her own honor maintained. Scene II depicts the effect of Agnes' death on Albrecht, his attempts at vengeance, and their failure because of the sacrifices made by Ernst.

The purpose of the last act, taken as an entity, is to vindicate completely the policy of Ernst, the necessity of Agnes' death, which is, in other words, the subordination of the individual to the state. For a time, there is a chance that Preising's plan may avail, but this causes only a momentary lull in the storm which is about to burst forth. It is artistic, certainly, to have this lull just before the catastrophe, for it holds the

attention to the very last word. Ernst's sacrifice is to be repaid by Albrecht's becoming his successor. But this can be obtained only by further sacrifice, abdication, so that Albrecht, as ruler, may be capable of judging his father. This last act is particularly effective, for there is a catastrophe in the life of Agnes, Albrecht and Ernst. In the case of Agnes, death is the catastrophe; in regard to Albrecht, it is the loss of Agnes, that which was dearest of all to him; in regard to Ernst, it is his abdication. Yet each has been repaid; Agnes has preserved Bavaria, and maintained her honor; in Albrecht the sense of princely duty has been aroused; and Ernst is assured of the welfare of Bavaria.

The plot in Törring is much simpler, and we do not find the same attention paid to detail as in Hebbel. Törring may have been aware that his plot wasn't strong enough to bear much that wasn't absolutely essential, even though these non-essentials might serve to elucidate character, to make the plot more realistic, or to serve by contrast as an enhancing effect. Of these an abundance are found in Hebbel as is so often true of Shakspeare. Some characters not absolutely essential, such as Kasper and Theobald, who are not found in Törring's, appear in Hebbel's drama. And Knippeldollinger, the old dandy, somewhat passé, who would do without him? It is not simply a desire to depict various individuals that dominates Hebbel, as is so often the case with novelists, for Hebbel makes use of Knippeldollinger. He is the means of Agnes' going to the tournament, where she sees the duke. Theobald does service, both in the earlier and latter portion of the play. All of these minor characters are utilized, and seem to form an integral part of the drama. Something would be lacking if they were omitted. Törring, of course, may be praised for dramatic economy, as he has limited himself practically to the essentials, but

dramatic economy may be so severe as to give the impression of barrenness.

To form the background and the tone for "Agnes Bernauer" Hebbel must have devoted much time and consideration. He tries to reproduce the spirit of the times, by depicting "Burger" life and the court life of the early fifteenth century. To this, Törring seems to give no thought; the place is Augsburg, and that is enough. Hebbel pays particular attention to the guilds, showing how they attained their prominence, and how distasteful they are to the aristocracy. The local pride of the citizens of Augsburg is a point not too minute to be mentioned. The introduction of the poetess-prodigy to the duke certainly gives a realistic air to this ball given by the "Bürger" and causes the feeling that the ball was arranged simply to bring Agnes and the duke together, to be dissipated. The alternation of groups as in the Garden Scene in Faust brings clearly before us the various kinds of people at the ball, and makes the meeting of Albrecht and Agnes very natural. It is the attention to detail that stamps the great artist. To be sure, it requires an artist to portray things in broad outlines, but to select and to depict faithfully details is certainly an added laurel, making an artist a great artist.

There are a few cases in Hebbel where entire scenes or rather "Auftritte" might be omitted without vitally affecting the plot. This can not be said of Törring. For example, the scene in the castle at Vohburg might have been omitted, as far as vital connection with the plot is concerned, yet it serves to show the devotion of the janitor to his country and his duke. Then, too, the following Auftritt where Albrecht and Agnes discover the gifts of Albrecht's mother, could be dispensed with, but its purpose is to foreshadow coming events. In addition to this it serves as a contrast to both the preceding and following scene, where

Ernst's plans are seen to be impossible, and where Albrecht receives Preising. Several of the "Auftritte" in the fifth act can be omitted advantageously, as proved by Hebbel's revision. Many of the scenes have details not essential, yet they have an excellent effect in the drama as a whole; for example, the long scene between Törring, Bernauer, and Agnes, where the discussion about coats-of-arms, and the proposition of Törring are much more effective, because owing to Törring's indecision how natural it is to use innuendo and to dally before reaching his point. Then there are the long scenes between Ernst and Preising. But these require length, for the pros and cons of important questions must be thoroughly dealt with, so that, after the question has been viewed in every possible light, we may be impressed with Ernst's careful, thoughtful consideration. This sharp, terse, pithy argument may be considered by some as a blemish, for there is no action. Yet to me, this seemed particularly fine, for it reproduces Ernst's line of reasoning, and is certainly more interesting than a monologue. To me, it resembled a fencing match in which the thrusts of Preising are successfully parried by the nobler, saner thoughts and plans of Ernst. Had Preising been used simply as a foil in this argument, and then have fulfilled his role, there might have been some cause for complaint, but from this controversy develops Preising's plan to save Agnes.

The structure of Törring's drama reminds one of a sketch containing the essentials of a picture, the finished product of which, is Hebbel's drama. Törring's plot is well arranged, and events move more quickly to the end. It possesses unity of action, but violates the other two unities, although it doesn't violate the unity of time nearly so much as Hebbel. Traces of the "Sturm und Drang" are plainly evident, one very noticeable example being the drowning of Agnes on the stage. Hebbel man-

ages the problem by having Preising relate to Ernst the details of the execution of the court's decree. Schiller and Shakspeare have avoided similar problems in a like manner. Almost all of the excellencies of Törring's drama, Hebbel has utilized, but there is one particularly fine incident Hebbel could not use because of his different conception of the duke. This point in Törring's drama is the intense devotion to the state which Thorring shows by casting aside his personal dislike to Ernst, and coming to intercede with Albrecht in behalf of his father and the state. When we see personal animosity cast aside, we may be sure the danger to the state is great. In Hebbel, this task falls to Preising, and is not so effective.

The structure of Ludwig's fragment can not be compared with Hebbel and Törring, for his plots are not complete, and a plot must be judged as a whole. Parts of the plot, in regard to sequence are well arranged, as for example; the duke's discovery that Agnes is a coquette just after he has suffered public disgrace for her sake. This is very effective, even though brought about by the conniving Isotta. The duke's refusal to believe the message, and his attempts to test Agnes are really pathetic. He can not believe what he doesn't want to believe. The plot so far as one can tell seems to depend on those secret missives of Isotta, and bears too much the nature of chance to be a strong plot.

Even with the great praise Hebbel's "Agnes Bernauer" deserves it can not be called a masterpiece. It can not be linked with Faust and Hamlet. Its fundamental basis is not a wholly universal truth. When an individual opposes his interests to those of the state, we know he must fall, but when the opposition is brought about simply by a difference in caste, a non-universal element enters and detracts from the universality. "Agnes

Bernauer" probably appeals less to Americans than to Europeans, because we are not faithful adherents to caste. Of Europeans "Agnes Bernauer" naturally appeals most to Germans, especially to the Bavarians. It appeals to all Germany because it is a forcible reminder of the various trials the governments of Germany have undergone, many of these, being due to the fact that the policy of the ruler was not advantageous to the state. Ernst is a typical German ruler, and the same may be said of Albrecht who in several respects reminds me of Frederick the Great; in his life as a prince, when his feelings were his master, his love for poetry and music, and his life afterwards as a ruler. Hebbel, of course, does not depict Albrecht as a ruler, but I feel his spirit is tamed, that he probably married Anna von Braunschweig, and worked for the interests of the state. He became like Frederick the Great, like Ernst, the servant of the people.

Yet, even if we don't believe in the distinction which blue blood gives, and in the vast social chasm between classes, still we ought to be able to fancy to ourselves just such conditions as prevailed in Bavaria in the early fifteenth century. If we can do this, Hebbel's drama will mean much more to us as a drama.

Had Hebbel written of some country at the time it was a world power, his drama would be a greater one, simply because of the influence it would wield. But we must remember that just as the common, ordinary individual may experience a great tragedy, so may a small country. We should not disparage a drama for that reason.

Can we fancy ourselves transported to Bavaria in the early fifteenth century, then I believe we can feel there is a guilt in Agnes, for she acted contrary to the very customs on which the state is founded. She has transgressed the customs of Bavaria, and the penalty is sometimes as severe

as violation of the divine law. Preising and Ernst as men acknowledge Agnes is guiltless, but as statesmen they see her death is necessary. Preising, Ernst and Albrecht have ideas too advanced for the times, but Albrecht fails to realize this, while Preising and Ernst know they must submit to the mass, the opinions of the average man. Only, when we believe Agnes is atoning for some fault, some indiscretion, can we regard her death as tragic, otherwise, it is merely pathetic. She has fallen between two millstones and is crushed. What placed her there- chance, or her own will? Could Agnes have possibly prevented the outcome, then the action is tragic, not merely pathetic. Agnes is the victim of the circumstances of the era in which she lived, circumstances which she consciously defied, her excuse for such an act being that she was following the eternally human in her heart which she believed God sanctioned. The fact that the play depends on a characteristic of an age, which is not really "das ewige menschliche" detracts from its value. Ludwig was incapable of feeling the significance of the age in which Agnes lived, and regarded her always as "die Unschuldige." Accordingly in his treatment he furnishes Agnes with an incontestable guilt, that of marrying the duke for his title. Could Ludwig have acknowledged Agnes' death as tragic, he must certainly have felt the superiority of Hebbel's Agnes.

That Hebbel has been able to treat nobly what historians call a "böse Handlung" is remarkable. It is a conception that deserves to rank with Shakspeare's Brutus. But, even better, in Hebbel we find all of the characters acting from the best motives. There is no Cassius here. That a tragedy so impressive, so effective, can be created out of the material Hebbel had at his disposal is really extraordinary. Ernst has the welfare of his people always at heart, while Albrecht and Agnes, although thinking

mainly of self never transgress divine law. Törring, on the other hand, did not succeed in raising his "Agnes Bernauerin" much above a "böse Handlung," as the death of Agnes is brought about by the vicedom's desire for revenge. In spite of the fact that the vicedom tries to make it appear that it is the whole nobility who demand Agnes' death, we can feel the intense personal satisfaction he enjoyed in striking at Albrecht through Agnes. This same motive is used by Ludwig to motivate Agnes' death. Ludwig, and Törring both seem incapable of treating the subject as an historical drama, for their interest in the love story completely overshadows Ernst and the state.

CONCLUSION

In every respect, we may say that Hebbel's drama is superior both to Ludwig and Törring. In the conception of the plot, its development, in character portrayal, we acknowledge the nobler sphere in which Hebbel conceived his drama. In the main, Albrecht and Agnes resemble Törring's treatment, but in Ernst we have Hebbel's conception alone, and it is a master conception worthy to rank with Shakspeare's best character portrayals. The plot is well motivated, and retains our interest to the very last word. The plot surpasses that of Romeo and Juliet, with which it has some qualities that are comparable. Hebbel's close attention to detail has made the atmosphere of the drama very helpful in the interpretation of character, and the abundance of local coloring has added many realistic touches both to characters and plot. A clearly defined setting is necessary to the interpretation of such a drama as this, and Hebbel has performed his task most creditably. The drama teaches a great universal truth, that of the necessary submission of the individual to the state, but the way in which this world law conflicts with Albrecht and Agnes prevents this drama from being a masterpiece. Agnes becomes a sacrifice to the state, yet at the same time she is merely the victim of the era in which she lived. It is this and not some defect in their inner natures that forms the tragedy. As an artistic whole, it deserves great praise, for Hebbel could not have used his material better, but the fundamental basis of this drama, is not the eternally true, for such a tragedy could not happen in this twentieth century, and for that reason the power of "Agnes Bernauer" to stir us will grow less and less.





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